

MERKLEY for cosponsoring the Expedited CARD Reform for Consumers Act. In addition, along with Senate Banking Committee Chairman DODD, today I cosponsored a bill that would immediately freeze interest rates on existing credit card balances. This is an important bill that will allow consumers to pay off their credit card debt at the interest rate they consented to when they took on that debt. It is a matter of fairness. I look forward to working with Chairman DODD and colleagues from both parties to pass these important bills as quickly as possible.

FIREARM DEATHS

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, according to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, 3,184 children and teens died from a firearm in the United States in 2006, a 6 percent increase from 2005. This breaks down to the life of an American child being taken every 2 hours and 45 minutes by someone wielding a gun. More than five times as many, or nearly 17,500 children and teens suffered a nonfatal gun injury that year, a 7 percent increase from the previous year.

The 2009 Children's Defense Fund's report "Protect Children, Not Guns" illustrates the problem even more pointedly. The report, which provides key findings on children's gun deaths, states that more preschoolers were killed by firearms in 2006 than were law enforcement officers in the line of duty.

This type of violence is preventable. It only requires action. The Children's Defense Fund's report makes a number of recommendations about how to protect children from gun violence. Among other things, they recommend schools provide nonviolent conflict resolution courses for all students and communities create positive activities for children and teenagers to reduce the influence of gangs and drugs. They also recommend passage of such common sense gun safety legislation as closing the gun show loophole, strengthening the Brady background check system and reauthorizing the assault weapons ban.

We cannot afford to sit and watch as so many young lives are irrevocably destroyed by gun violence. Passage of commonsense legislation would help end these types of tragedies.

REMEMBERING SPECIALIST JACOB WILLIAM SEXTON

Mr. BAYH. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of Army SPC Jacob William Sexton. A member of Company A, 2nd Battalion 151st Infantry of the Indiana National Guard, Jacob was only 21 years old when his life came to a tragic end on October 12, 2009, while on leave from active deployment in Afghanistan.

Today, I join Jacob's family and friends in mourning his untimely death. Jacob will be remembered as a loving brother, son and friend to many.

He is survived by his parents, Jeffery and Barbara; his three brothers, Joshua, Jeremiah and Jared; his paternal grandparents; maternal grandmother; and a community of friends and family members. Like two of his brothers, Jacob followed in the footsteps of his father, an Army veteran. His brother described Jacob as his father's best friend.

A native of Farmland, IN, Jacob enlisted in the National Guard after graduating from Monroe Central High School in 2006. He served his first tour in Iraq with the Winchester guard unit as a humvee driver. Upon returning home, he continued to serve his country by training other military humvee drivers and keeping charge of weapons and ammunition at Camp Atterbury. More recently, he was deployed near Kabul, Afghanistan, where he was described by his superiors as a model soldier with good morale and an excellent sense of humor.

While we struggle to express our sorrow over the loss of Jacob, we can take pride in the example he set as a soldier, a son, a grandson, and a brother. Today and always, he will be remembered by family, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we cherish the legacy of his service and his life.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Jacob William Sexton in the record of the Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace.

I pray that the Sexton family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE I HAVE WINGS BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

• Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the I Have Wings breast cancer foundation in Erlanger, KY. October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and I Have Wings has dedicated its efforts to the ongoing battle against breast cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, this year over 190,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in our Nation and an estimated 40,000 Americans will lose their fight with breast cancer. At the same time, today there are millions of women in our country who have been treated for breast cancer.

Throughout my tenure as a U.S. Senator, I have supported legislation to increase awareness, prevention, and funding for breast cancer. Too often we hear about a case of breast cancer that is caught at a late stage, leaving the patient and families with little hope. These stories remind us why we must continue to support and expand National Breast Cancer Awareness Month efforts.

The I Have Wings foundation is a leader in the fight against breast cancer. It strives to educate individuals,

provides encouragement for those in need, and generously supports research efforts in Kentucky. And while efforts by I Have Wings and other breast cancer foundations often go unnoticed in the ongoing battle against this deadly disease, we must remember that they play an important role as an activist and educator in our communities.

Again, I commend the efforts of the I Have Wings foundation as our Nation continues to spread breast cancer awareness.●

REMEMBERING DANIEL MELNICK

• Mr. DODD. Madam President, I wish to speak in honor of a good friend and a friend to American cinema, Daniel Melnick, who passed away recently at the age of 77.

Those who know Hollywood will remember Daniel as a successful producer of film and television, and as a studio executive who believed in audacity and creativity—a filmmaker's studio executive, if you will.

He was a prodigy, becoming the youngest producer at CBS Television at the age of 19, where he worked on such series as the legendary "Get Smart," and producing his first feature film at MGM, the thrilling "Straw Dogs," before he turned 40. Over the next decade, he played a role in the development of films ranging from "Network" to "Kramer vs. Kramer" to "The China Syndrome," while serving as head of production at both MGM and Columbia.

As a film producer, Daniels's credits include "All That Jazz," "Altered States," "Footloose," "Roxanne," and "L.A. Story." Fittingly, his work as a producer was bold and vibrant—just the sort of films he encouraged as a studio executive.

In all, Daniel's films were nominated for more than 80 Academy Awards, and won more than two dozen Oscars.

I will remember Daniel as a warm, funny, breathtakingly creative friend whose beautiful house in Utah was the site of many wonderful get-togethers. We are poorer for the loss, but richer for all he gave to our country and the arts.●

TIRBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICHEL G. JONES

• Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, today, I recognize the service LTC Michel "Shel" G. Jones, on the occasion of his retirement from active duty in the U.S. Army. Lieutenant Colonel Jones is an exceptional officer who has served our great Nation for more than 28 years, including 22 years on active duty and 6 years in the Iowa Army National Guard.

I have personally come to know and respect Lieutenant Colonel Jones over the 2½ years he served as an Army congressional liaison for the Army's weapons and tracked combat vehicles programs, to include the Army's Future

Combat System. His expertise and commitment were instrumental in educating Members and staff in the Senate and House on Army combat systems, modernization programs and initiatives. His tireless efforts working with Members and staff of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees were instrumental in the successful authorization and appropriation of the Abrams tank, Bradley fighting vehicle, small arms and crew-served weapons, Stryker, elements of the Future Combat System and the Paladin Integrated Management programs.

Lieutenant Colonel Jones' congressional liaison assignment was only the capstone to what is an outstanding career of service to the Army and our Nation. He served as an armor officer in numerous command and staff positions. His operational assignments began in the Mojave Desert at Fort Irwin, CA, serving as a platoon leader at the National Training Center where he trained thousands of soldiers in desert warfare. He served as commander for Alpha Company, 4th Battalion 37th Armor, Heavy, followed by command of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd of the 70th Armor Battalion with the 1st Armored Division at Fort Riley, KS. After transitioning in to the acquisition career field, Lieutenant Colonel Jones was assigned to Fort Knox, KY, as a combat development officer and as a project manager for the Army's Future Combat System, FCS, in Detroit, MI.

The strength of our soldiers comes from their families. Lieutenant Colonel Jones' strength came from his wife Dynette, and his two sons Colton and Conner. This Nation is grateful for their commitment and personal sacrifices made throughout Shel's military service. We also thank his mother Joyce, who recently passed, and his father William "Gerry" Jones for raising such a fine son and patriot. Shel is from a military family. His father is a retired soldier and his brother, Dr. Keith Jones, serves as a major in the National Guard. This Nation remains indebted to your service.

On behalf of the Senate and the United States of America, I commend Lieutenant Colonel Jones for his tireless efforts in the support of our Army, our military, and our Nation. As Shel and his family prepare to start a new life in the great State of Oklahoma, I congratulate him on completing an extremely successful military career and wish all of them the best in all their future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO KAREN M. ECKERT

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, today I celebrate the retirement of Karen M. Eckert after 37 years of excellent service to the federal government. Karen, a remarkable public servant under both the legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and devoted resident of Buffalo, NY, retired on May 29, 2009.

Karen began her career as an immigration inspector at Niagara Falls, NY, in 1972 and quickly became knowledgeable in all areas of immigration. Her work has touched the lives of thousands—giving hope to countless immigrants and new citizens in pursuit of their dreams, as well as uniting adoptive parents with children in need of a loving home, while striving to protect children and underprivileged birth parents from exploitation.

Karen became a leading expert in intercountry adoption and child citizenship. In this role, she was invaluable in establishing the Child Citizenship Program in Buffalo, NY, drafting orphan regulations, and leading USCIS to take the steps necessary to implement the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

Her outstanding and distinguished service has been recognized through numerous awards, including an Angel in Adoption Award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute in 2003, the Department of Homeland Security Secretary's Meritorious Service Award in 2006 and the USCIS Director's Award in 2008 for her direction and participation in the Hague Implementation Working Group.

It is impossible to count the number of individuals who have personally benefited from Karen's professionalism, insights and dedication and she will be sincerely missed by her colleagues worldwide.

We congratulate Karen M. Eckert on her outstanding and distinguished career and for the inspiration she is leaving behind.●

RECOGNIZING WORLD WAR II VETERANS

● Mr. LUGAR. Madam President, today I wish to pay tribute to the American men and women who served their country valiantly during World War II, and to a nonprofit organization known as HonorFlight which flies surviving veterans, at no expense to themselves, to Washington, DC, to visit the World War II Memorial. I wish to have printed in the RECORD a letter from Scott C. Stump, a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, describing the efforts of HonorFlight which will enable two Hoosier veterans, Harvey H. Hammerlund and Joseph B. Smrt, to visit the World War II Memorial this fall.

The letter follows:

DEAR SENATOR LUGAR: During World War II, 16 million American men and women selflessly, and unflinchingly served our country and defended our way of life for future generations. Now, more than 64 years since the end of that Great War, only three million of our World War II Veterans walk among us. Even more alarming, we are losing these veterans at the rate of 1,000 per day, which is causing their ranks to dwindle at an alarming rate. Now more than ever, we need to take pause and recognize these veterans and their contributions to making our great country what she is today. Part of that recognition,

the National World War II Monument in Washington, DC, was completed and opened to World War II Veterans and the public on 29 April 2004.

Since its opening, the monument has been like a shining star, beckoning to our World War II Veterans. In fact, many of those veterans have had a dream of visiting this monument erected to the remembrance of "The Greatest Generation." Unfortunately, due to health, monetary, and other constraints, many World War II Veterans have been unable to visit "their" Memorial.

In 2005 that all began to change when a non-profit organization known as "HonorFlight" was born. Several dedicated individuals had a vision to fly any and all of our World War II Veterans to Washington, to see "their" Memorial, at absolutely no cost to the veterans. This wonderful, all volunteer force, began flying in 2005 and flew a total of 137 Veterans to see the Memorial that first year. Now, a brief four years later, there will be a total of over 42,000 veterans who have been able to fulfill their dreams and wishes of being able to visit Washington, DC and, most importantly, the World War II Memorial.

I would like to publicly thank HonorFlight and their network of dedicated volunteers for all of their efforts in making dreams come true. I am truly humbled to be a small part of such a great organization.

On this date, I would also like to recognize two very special World War II Veterans who are about to embark on a very special journey to Washington, DC. These two Hoosiers, both from the fertile farmlands of Starke County, answered their call to serve their country long ago, and in so doing served with honor, dignity, and courage.

Harvey H. Hammerlund was born on 21 December 1924 in rural Knox, Indiana. Harvey was a farm boy who enlisted in The United States Navy on 4 January 1944. Harvey served on The U.S.S. Urben 631 as an electrician. Harvey spent the remainder of the war traversing the hostile enemy-laden South Pacific. Mr. Hammerlund was discharged on 23 March 1946 at the rank of 3rd Class Petty Officer. Harvey returned home and was a farmer for the remainder of his working years. Harvey was and is a leader in Starke County serving on various boards and committees, as well as being active with V.F.W. Post 748 in Knox. Harvey resides on his farm outside of Knox with Dee, his wife of 59 years.

Joseph B. Smrt was born on 14 February 1916 in North Judson, Indiana. Joe enlisted in The United States Army on 11 December 1942. Joe served in Patton's Third Army in the 94th Division Company B 19th Engineers. Joe proudly served all over Central Europe, including the epic "Battle of the Bulge" in Belgium. Mr. Smrt was discharged on 27 December 1945 but continued serving in The U.S. Army Reserves for the next 33 years, retiring as a Sergeant First Class. Joe worked and continues to work as a Surveyor as his profession and continues to be a pillar of the Starke County Community. Joe still lives in Knox with Ursula, his wife of 58 years.

Thank you, Senator LUGAR, for recognizing a great organization and two outstanding individuals. These two men have truly played a part in shaping the America that we know and love today.

Sincerely,

SCOTT C. STUMP. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.